

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 074 418

CG 007 912

AUTHOR Christensen, Kathleen C.; Sedlacek, William E.
TITLE Differential Faculty Attitudes Towards Blacks, Females and Students in General.
INSTITUTION Maryland Univ., College Park. Counseling Center.
REPORT NO BR-13-72
PUB DATE 72
NOTE 14p.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Academic Performance; *College Faculty; *College Students; Educational Attitudes; Females; *Negro Students; Research Projects; Stereotypes; Student Attitudes; Student Behavior; Student Characteristics; *Student Teacher Relationship; Surveys; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This project assessed faculty attitudes at the University of Maryland toward undergraduates in general, blacks, and females by administering three forms of a questionnaire to 204 faculty members. The items on the questionnaire were identical except that the word "black" was inserted in one form and the word "female" in another. The overall results showed that faculty were generally more positive toward blacks and females than toward undergraduates in general. The faculty stereotype for blacks was one of serious, hardworking, outspoken students who often deserve greater punishment for breaking rules. Females were seen as the best, hardest working, most creative students. Although faculty members may not hold these attitudes, the authors conclude that the direction of their over-compensation suggests that they may at least be aware of potential prejudices toward blacks and females. References and questionnaire results are included. (Author/SES)

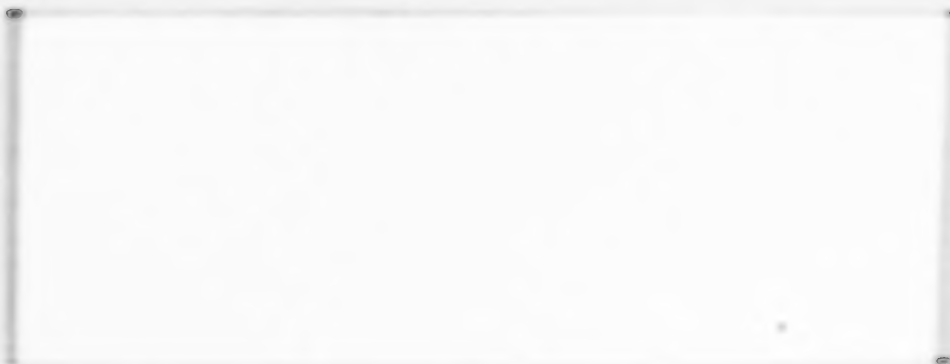
ED 074418

COUNSELING CENTER

Office of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

College Park, Maryland



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR
OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY
REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

FILMED FROM BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ED 007 912

ED 074418

COUNSELING CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND

DIFFERENTIAL FACULTY ATTITUDES
TOWARD BLACKS, FEMALES AND STUDENTS IN GENERAL

Rathleen C. Christensen and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report # 13-72

COUNSELING CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

DIFFERENTIAL FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARD BLACKS, FEMALES AND STUDENTS IN GENERAL

Kathleen C. Christensen and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report # 13-72

Summary

Faculty attitudes toward undergraduates in general, blacks and females were assessed by developing three forms of a questionnaire. The items were identical except that the word "black" was inserted in one form and the word "female" in another. Returns were received from 204 of 300 (68%) faculty but only 153 were usable due to incomplete responses. Data were analyzed by analysis of variance (.05 level) and Scheffe post hoc comparisons (.10 level). Compared to undergraduates in general, black undergraduates were seen as: more hardworking, less likely to try to stay on the good side of their instructor, more in need of punishment for breaking rules, but are too often punished for cheating, less likely to change because of criticism, more likely to express disagreement, more serious academically, and less likely to take pass/fail courses to avoid work.

Compared to undergraduates in general, female undergraduates were seen as: more hardworking, more creative, less likely to be told what they want to hear, more interested in learning, punished too often for cheating, knowing more what they are talking about, less likely to cheat on an exam, more likely to be able to handle the classwork, less likely to change because of criticism, more likely to express disagreement, having a more realistic view of their capabilities, and more varied in their interests.

Compared to black undergraduates, female undergraduates were seen as: more hardworking, more creative, less likely to be told what they want to hear, knowing more what they are talking about, less likely to cheat on an exam, more likely to be able to handle classwork, more honest, and more varied in their interests.

While one might be naturally skeptical of the results because of previous studies on racial and sexual attitudes, it may be that we at least see the direction of faculty stereotypes. They may not really hold the attitudes, but the direction of their overcompensation shows that they may at least be aware of the potential prejudices and feelings they may have toward blacks and females. It should also be noted that while approximately 40% of College Park undergraduates are female, only about 4% are black. Thus for many faculty, attitudes toward black students are based on little, if any, direct contact.

Results were further discussed in terms of previous research and methodological problems in the study.

Although the policies and concepts of *in loco parentis* are being abandoned by administrators in institutions of higher learning (American Council on Education, 1970), faculty may remain relatively unaffected. Since attitudes and behavior bear a functional relationship (Sherif and Sherif, 1956), it is important to identify the attitudinal set which faculty bring with them into the racially and sexually mixed classroom. What are faculty members' perceptions of their students? The present study will attempt to look at some of these attitudes.

Research has tended to deal primarily with student attitudes toward faculty (e.g., Chickering, 1970; Deshpande, Webb and Marks, 1970). Rubinstein and Mitchell (1970), found a relationship between whether students felt free to ask questions and express opinions in class, if questions were asked, and course appreciation. Schmidt and Sedlacek (1972) defined student satisfaction as "feeling that most instructors, advisors and administrators care about students, that channels for expressing student complaints are available, and that coursework is stimulating."

More specifically, there have been attempts to look at attitudes of student subgroups. Sedlacek, Brooks and Herman (1971) found that black students felt that administrators and faculty advisors did not care as much as the teaching faculty about students. Riesman (1970) reported that women tend to be more responsible and responsive at every level of schooling than are men, and respond more to the instructor as a person whom they hate to let down. Riesman concludes that, as a result, women students refrain from getting involved in their majors for fear of disappointing their professor by dropping the field for marriage or for a less demanding career. Astin and Panos (1969) found that career choices of college students tend to be toward greater differentiation of sex roles with women choosing more typically "feminine" careers and men more "masculine" ones.

The necessity of looking at faculty perceptions of their students becomes obvious when one realizes the extent of their authority. Faculty reluctance to relinquish their power is reflected in a study by Blai (1970) who found that the vast majority of faculty members disapproved of even non-voting student membership on academic policy committees. Fields (1971) suggests that the exploitation of blacks is subtly carried over into the academic area.

Racial attitude research has been plagued by methodological problems (Zavallone and Cook, 1965; Sedlacek and Brooks, 1970; and Sigall and Page, 1970). Current societal sanctions against verbalizing negative attitudes toward blacks makes it more difficult to accurately measure racial attitudes (Ostrom and Upshaw, 1970). Sedlacek and Brooks (1971), looking at white attitudes toward blacks, found a personal and social tendency or set among subjects to keep their "real" attitudes to themselves. Rokeach and his colleagues approached racial attitude assessment with the hypothesis that prejudice is largely attributable to belief congruence rather than race (Rokeach, Smith and Evans, 1960). However, Sedlacek and Brooks (1972) provided data to the contrary and objected to this idea on the grounds that it provides subjects with an emotionally bound alternative (race) and a less threatening, more rational choice (belief in an issue). Under these conditions subjects tend to choose the belief to avoid dealing with race. Sedlacek and Brooks' research has emphasized the importance of not allowing subjects to psychologically withdraw from the measuring instrument.

The relationship between performance and expectations has been shown in other areas (Sherif and Sherif, 1956). It is not unreasonable to hypothesize that it is also operative in the academic area. If it is true that college major choice is correlated with sex role and that black students are exploited, what part does the faculty play? This study will look at several aspects of this question; differential faculty attitudes toward students in general, female students and black students.

Method

The Faculty Attitude Scale was developed to assess the attitudes of faculty toward black students, female students, and students in general. The scale consists of 26 bipolar items concerning perceptions of each of these three groups. Three forms were developed. The three forms were identical except that Form A referred to undergraduate students in general, Form B referred to black undergraduate students, and Form C to female undergraduate students. This basic methodology was developed and discussed by Sedlacek, Brooks and Chaples (1971). In order to eliminate the possibility of response set, the positive pole was randomly varied from left to right for each item.

A stratified random sample of 300 faculty members at the University of Maryland, College Park, was selected (100 each of assistant, associate and full professors) and each subject was randomly assigned to a form. 100 copies of each form were mailed together with a cover letter requesting the faculty member's cooperation in completing the Scale. Scales were completed anonymously, and a post card was to be returned separately to indicate completion of the Scale. Follow-up mailings and telephone calls were used to increase returns.

Analyses of variance (fixed effects, .05 level) with Form (A, B, or C) as the main effect, and Scheffe' post hoc tests at the .10 level were conducted. The .10 level is recommended due to the conservative nature of the technique (Scheffe', 1959).

Results and Discussion

A total of 204 (68%) of the questionnaires were returned. However, 51 (25%) were unusable, due either to the respondents leaving four or more of the items blank or because they refused to answer any of the items. Only 6 of the 62 Form A returns were unusable, while 31 of 79 Form B, and 14 of 63 Form C returns were unusable. There were no significant differences by faculty rank on number or

quality of returns. The final sample was 84% (N=129) Male and 16% (N=24) Female.

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations and significance tests for the 26 items. Fifteen of the 26 items were significantly different on Form (F at .05). Scheffe post hoc comparisons (.10 level) showed that Form A was significantly different from Form B on 8 items and from Form C on 13 items. Form B was significantly different from Form C on 8 items.

Compared to undergraduates in general, black undergraduates were seen as: more hardworking (item 1), less likely to try to stay on the good side of their instructor (item 6), more in need of punishment for breaking rules (item 8), but are too often punished for cheating (item 9), less likely to change because of criticism (item 19), more likely to express disagreement (item 20), more serious academically (item 23) and less likely to take pass/fail courses to avoid work (item 26).

Compared to undergraduates in general, female undergraduates were seen as: more hardworking (item 1), more creative (item 2), less likely to be told what they want to hear (item 3), more interested in learning (item 4), punished too often for cheating (item 9), knowing more what they are talking about (item 12), less likely to cheat on an exam (item 14), more likely to be able to handle the classwork (item 16), less likely to change because of criticism (item 19), more likely to express disagreement (item 20), having a more realistic view of their capabilities (item 21), and more varied in their interests (item 22).

Compared to black undergraduates, female undergraduates were seen as: more hardworking (item 1), more creative (item 2), less likely to be told what they want to hear (item 3), knowing more what they are talking about (item 12), less likely to cheat on an exam (item 14), more likely to be able to handle classwork (item 16), more honest (item 18), and more varied in their interests (item 22).

Several methodological problems should be noted. First the samples are likely biased in that many faculty did not return the questionnaire or returned it

incompleted. The extent of the bias is difficult to determine since a number of faculty who did return the questionnaire commented that they did research, taught graduate students only, were on sabbatical, held administrative posts, etc. Undoubtedly many of the nonreturnees were in one or more of these groups. Thus the definition of a faculty member is quite complex. It was also interesting that relatively more faculty returned Form B but many more Form B's were incomplete. Comments on the questionnaires and over the phone indicated that many faculty would have felt guilty about not returning the form but were reluctant to complete the items. These results are compatible with those of Sedlacek and Brooks (1971) who found evidence for a strong social set to be tolerant toward blacks among white university students. The same effect may have been present in Form C returns but it was less pronounced. It may be that mail questionnaires on emotional issues are unlikely to allow the assumptions necessary for the experimental manipulation of variables. That is, the random assignment of subjects to forms may have been violated because of incomplete returns.

Overall the results showed that faculty were generally more positive toward blacks and females, particularly females, than toward undergraduates in general. The faculty stereotype for blacks is that they are seen as serious, hardworking, outspoken, but perhaps should be kept in line more (item 8). Females were seen as the best, hardest working, most creative students.

While one might be naturally skeptical of the results because of previous studies on racial and sexual attitudes it may be that we at least see the direction of faculty stereotypes. They may not really hold the attitudes, but the direction of their overcompensation shows that they may at least be aware of the potential prejudices and feelings they may have toward blacks and females. It should also be noted that while approximately 40% of College Park undergraduates

are female, only about 4% are black. Thus for many faculty, attitudes toward black students are based on little, if any, direct contact.

Despite the limitations of the data presented here, it is hoped that they may provide the beginnings of a more complete consideration of all the variables affecting the student learning environment.

References

- American Council on Education's Special Committee on Campus Tensions. Recommendations and conclusions. *The EFE 15-Minute Report*, 1970, 6, No. 14.
- Astin, A.W. and Panos, R.J. *The educational and vocational development of college students*. Washington: American Council on Education, 1969.
- Blai, B.J. Faculty attitudes about student participation in academic and social policy-making. Marcum Junior College, 1970.
- Chickering, A.W. Communications - bedrock for college governance. *Educational Record*, 1970, 51, 148-153.
- Deshpande, A.S., Webb, S.C., and Marks, E. Student perceptions of engineering instructor behaviors and their relationship to the evaluation of instructors and courses. *American Educational Research Journal*, 1970, 7, 289-305.
- Fields, C.A. Black students in a white university. In *Financing equal opportunity in higher education: A college scholarship service colloquium*. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1970, 33-37.
- Ostrom, T.M. and Upshaw, H.S. Race differences in the judgment of attitude statements over a thirty-five year period. *Journal of Personality*, 1970, 38, 235-248.
- Riesman, D. Observations on contemporary college students - especially women. *Interchange*, 1970, 1, 52-63.
- Rokeach, M., Smith, P., and Evans, R. Two kinds of prejudice or one? in M. Rokeach (Ed.), *The open and closed mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1960, 132-168.
- Rubinstein, J. and Mitchell, H. Feeling free, student involvement, and appreciation. *American Psychological Association Proceedings*, 1970, 5, 623-624.
- Scheffe, H. *The analysis of variance*. New York: Wiley, 1959.
- Schmidt, D.K. and Sedlacek, W.E. Variables related to university student satisfaction. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 1972, 13, 233-238.
- Sedlacek, W.E. and Brooks, G.C., Jr. Measuring racial attitudes in a situational context. *Psychological Reports*, 1970, 27, 971-980.
- Sedlacek, W.E. and Brooks, G.C., Jr. Social acceptability in the measurement of racial attitudes. *Psychological Reports*, 1971, 29, 17-18.
- Sedlacek, W.E. and Brooks, G.C., Jr. *Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) Manual*. Chicago: Matresources, Inc., 1972.
- Sedlacek, W.E., Brooks, G.C., Jr., and Chaples, E.A. Problems in measuring racial attitudes: An experimental approach. *Cultural Study Center Research Report # 21-71*, University of Maryland, College Park, 1971.

- Sedlacek, W.E., Brooks, G.C., Jr., and Herman, M.H. Black student attitudes toward a predominantly white university. *Cultural Study Center Research Report # 8-71*, University of Maryland, College Park, 1971.
- Sherif, M. and Sherif, C.W. *An outline of social psychology*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956.
- Sigall, H. and Page, R. Two looks at stereotypes. *American Psychological Association Proceedings*, 1970, 5, 355-356.
- Zavallone, M. and Cook, S.W. Influence of judge's attitudes on ratings of favorableness of statements about a social group. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1965, 1, 43-54.

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Significance Tests for Forms

ITEM NO.	ITEM - Form A ^b	UNDERGRADUATE FORM (FORM A)		BLACK FORM (FORM B)		FEMALE FORM (FORM C)		SIGNIFICANT POST HOC COMPARISONS**
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1.	Generally speaking, the students in my classes won't work hard unless they're forced to.	3.06	1.18	3.93	1.00	4.41	.73	AxB, AxC, BxC
2.	It is difficult to cultivate imagination and creativity in my undergraduate students.	3.41	.93	3.78	1.00	4.29	.81	AxC, BxC
3.	The best way to handle my undergraduate students is to tell them what they want to hear.	4.66	.83	4.00	.88	4.55	.63	AxC, BxC
4.	Most of my undergraduate students are basically interested in learning.	2.20	.76	2.23	1.03	1.86	.65	AxC
5.	An undergraduate student's major is the best single guide as to the kind of person he or she is.	3.92	.89	3.88	1.09	3.81	.97	
6.	Most undergraduate students try to stay on the good side of their instructor.	2.41	.73	2.93	1.00	2.67	1.05	AxB
7.	An undergraduate who is willing to work hard in my academic discipline has a good chance of succeeding in my field.	2.06	.74	1.75	1.06	2.05	1.06	
8.	An undergraduate student shouldn't be punished for breaking a rule which he or she thinks is unreasonable.	3.55	1.08	4.15	.77	3.86	.93	AxB
9.	Too many undergraduate students are not punished for cheating.	2.67	.94	3.60	.96	3.52	.83	AxB, AxC
10.	Undergraduate students who can't pass basic courses in their major aren't worth bothering about.	3.59	1.00	3.70	1.07	3.79	1.05	

Table 1. Continued

Means, Standard Deviations, and Significance Tests for Forms

ITEM NO.	ITEM - Form A ^b	UNDERGRADUATE FORM (FORM A)		BLACK FORM (FORM B)		FEMALE FORM (FORM C)		SIGNIFICANT POST HOC COMPARISONS**
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1.	My classes would be better if undergraduate students controlled their emotions and were just concerned with learning subject matter.	3.92	.86	3.85	.95	4.05	.91	
2.	Undergraduate students who talk about abstract problems usually don't know what they are talking about.	3.74	.88	3.73	.93	4.14	.90	AxC, BxC
3.	Most undergraduate students will tell the professor when he has incorrectly computed their grades, even if he has given them more points than they deserve.	3.22	.96	3.23	.97	3.29	.76	
4.	Most undergraduate students would cheat on an exam if given the chance.	3.63	.76	3.70	.99	4.17	.79	AxC, BxC
5.	Usually undergraduate students are capable of the responsibilities of contract grading.	2.69	.82	2.43	.84	2.50	.80	
6.	Most undergraduate students can handle the work in my courses.	2.06	.69	2.33	1.19	1.69	.64	AxC, BxC
7.	Undergraduate students are more concerned with achievement than popularity with other students.	2.63	.73	2.50	.85	2.55	.63	
8.	Most undergraduate students are basically honest.	1.90	.51	2.05	.75	1.69	.64	BxC
9.	Most undergraduate students will change their opinion as a result of an onslaught of criticism.	2.74	.91	3.50	.82	3.17	.80	AxB, AxC
10.	The average undergraduate student will rarely express an opinion in a group when others disagree with him/her.	3.04	.91	3.45	.82	3.55	.99	AxB, AxC

Table 1.

Means^a, Standard Deviations, and Significance Tests for Forms

ITEM NO.	ITEM - Form A ^b	UNDERGRADUATE FORM (FORM A)		BLACK FORM (FORM B)		FEMALE FORM (FORM C)		SIGNIFICANT POST HOC COMPARISONS**
		Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	Means	S.D.	
21. ^a	Most undergraduate students have an unrealistically favorable view of their own capabilities.	3.29	.84	3.50	1.01	3.83	.70	AxC
22. ^a	Undergraduate students are pretty much alike in their basic interests.	3.65	.97	3.68	.97	4.18	1.01	AxC, BxC
23. ^a	Most undergraduate students are attending college for serious academic reasons.	2.71	.84	2.25	.78	2.33	.95	AxB
24.	Undergraduate students in my classes generally call me by my first name.	4.18	.99	4.30	.88	4.52	.59	
25.	It is good for undergraduate students to seek personal recognition.	1.84	.51	1.63	.74	1.93	.75	
26. ^a	Undergraduate students take advantage of pass-fail courses to do minimum work.	3.12	.97	3.55	1.01	3.64	.79	AxB, AxC

^a Scale (1 = Strongly agree; 5 = Strongly disagree)^b For Form B insert "black" before undergraduate and for Form C insert "female" before undergraduate

* Overall F significant (.05 level)

** Scheffé's (.10 level)